1   **WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

2   1.   A method for tracking individual outbound mail pieces using a

3   computer-based postage system, said method comprising:

4   assigning an identifier to a particular mail piece wherein said identifier

5   uniquely identifies the particular mail piece during a particular period of time; and

6   relating the unique mail piece identifier to a particular mailer.

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8   2.   The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 1, said method

9   further comprising:

10   encoding said unique mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology; and

11   fixing the unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology in a visual media.

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13   3.   The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 2, said method

14   further comprising:

15   physically associating the unique first class mail piece identifier graphic

16   symbology fixed in the visual media with the particular first class mail piece.

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18   4.   The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 2, said method

19   further comprising:

20   receiving a plurality of electronic mail piece identifier representations, each

21   electronic mail piece identifier representation corresponding to one of a plurality

22   of unique mail piece identifiers; and

23   retrieving from the plurality of electronic mail piece identifier

24   representations, an electronic mail piece identifier that matches the particular

25   unique mail piece identifier that uniquely identifies the particular mail piece.

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27   5.   The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 1 wherein the

28   unique mail piece identifier comprises:

29   a subscriber identifier;

30   a mailing identifier; and

1　a delivery address identifier, wherein the delivery address identifier is unique

2　within a combination of the subscriber identifier and the mailing identifier.

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4　　　　6.　　　The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 5 wherein the

5　delivery address identifier is obtained from Internet-based postage delivery

6　address information.

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8　　　　7.　　　The outbound mail piece tracking method of Claim 1 wherein the

9　unique mail piece identifier comprises:

10　　　　　　a service type identifier;

11　　　　　　a subscriber identifier;

12　　　　　　a mailing identifier; and

13　　　　　　a delivery address identifier, wherein the delivery address identifier is

14　unique within a combination of the service type identifier, the subscriber identifier

15　and the mailing identifier.

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17　　　　8.　　　A unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology, said unique mail

18　piece identifier graphic symbology comprising:

19　　　　　　an encoded subscriber identifier;

20　　　　　　an encoded mailing identifier; and

21　　　　　　an encoded delivery address identifier, wherein the encoded delivery

22　address identifier is unique within a combination of the encoded subscriber

23　identifier and the encoded mailing identifier.

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25　　　　9.　　　The unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology of Claim 8, said

26　unique mail piece identifier graphic symbology further comprising:

27　　　　　　an encoded service type identifier; and

28　　　　　　wherein the encoded delivery address identifier is unique within a

29　combination of the encoded service type identifier, the encoded subscriber

30　identifier and the encoded mailing identifier.

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1   10.   A method of encoding a unique mail piece identifier as a graphic

2   symbology, said method comprising:

3   assigning an identifier to a particular mail piece wherein said identifier

4   uniquely identifies the particular mail piece during a particular period of time and

5   wherein said identifier comprises a subscriber identifier, a mailing identifier, and a

6   delivery address identifier, wherein the delivery address identifier is unique within

7   a combination of the subscriber identifier and the mailing identifier.

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9   11.   The method of encoding a unique mail piece identifier as a graphic

10   symbology of Claim 10, said method further comprising:

11   relating the unique mail piece identifier to a particular mailer.

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13   12.   The method of encoding a unique mail piece identifier as a graphic

14   symbology of Claim 11, said method further comprising:

15   encoding the unique mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology.

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17   13.   A method for tracking individual outbound mail pieces, said method

18   comprising:

19   receiving a postage printing request from a particular mailer, said postage

20   printing request comprising a delivery address; and

21   formulating a unique mail piece identifier, said unique mail piece identifier

22   comprising: a subscriber identifier, a mailing identifier; and the delivery address,

23   wherein the delivery address is unique within a combination of the subscriber

24   identifier and the mailing identifier.

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26   14.   The method of Claim 13, said method further comprising:

27   encoding the unique mail piece identifier as a graphic symbology.

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29   15.   The method of Claim 14 wherein the graphic symbology is a one-

30   dimensional bar-code.

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1   16.   The method of Claim 14, said method further comprising:

2   printing the graphic symbology.

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4   17.   The method of Claim 16, said method further comprising:

5   printing postage indicium in accordance with the postage printing request.

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7   18.   A computer-based postage system, said system comprising:

8   printing postage indicium for a particular mail piece in accordance with a

9   postage printing request; and

10   printing a tracking identifier for the particular mail piece.

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12   19.   The computer-based postage system of Claim 18 wherein said

13   tracking identifier comprising: a subscriber identifier and a mailing identifier.

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15   20.   The computer-based postage system of Claim 18 wherein said

16   tracking identifier is a unique mail piece identifier for the particular mail piece

17   comprising: a subscriber identifier, a mailing identifier; and an indication of a

18   delivery address, wherein the indication of the delivery address is unique within a

19   combination of the subscriber identifier and the mailing identifier.

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21   21.   The computer-based postage system of Claim 18, wherein the

22   postage indicium is printed on a first label and wherein the tracking identifier is

23   printed on a second label.

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25   22.   The computer-based postage system of Claim 18, wherein the

26   postage indicium and the tracking identifier are printed on an envelope.

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28   23.   A computer-based postage system, said system comprising:

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1   retrieving from a plurality of electronic mail piece identifier representations,

2   an electronic mail piece identifier that matches a particular unique mail piece

3   identifier that uniquely identifies a particular mail piece.

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5   24.   A method for tracking individual outbound mail pieces using a

6   computer-based postage system, said method comprising:

7   assigning a composite confirm identifier to a particular mail piece wherein

8   said composite confirm identifier uniquely identifies the particular mail piece

9   during a particular period of time; and

10   relating the unique mail piece composite confirm identifier to a particular

11   mailer.

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